

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DOON VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE – 21st MARCH 2006

EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the function and operation of the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) within East Ayrshire Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Emergency Planning Unit is responsible for co-ordinating the Council's response to any emergency situation which affects more than one Department of the Council. The Unit provides the primary liaison facility between the Council and the emergency services in such situations.
- 2.2 As it is impossible to anticipate the nature of all emergencies which might befall the Council, the work of the Unit the compilation and update of a series of plans which provide a guidance framework for Elected Members and officers of the Council in an emergency situation.
- 2.3 Plans which are maintained and updated include:
- Civil Emergency Plan and Out of Hours Directory; and
 - Flood Response Plan, the Rest Centre Plan etc.
- 2.4 The Unit arranges exercises on a regular basis to test the effectiveness of the current plans. These exercises range from simply evaluating the availability of staff available to deal with an emergency situation occurring outwith normal Council working hours to "mock" exercises involving appropriate Departments and emergency services in dealing with a hypothetical emergency.
- 2.5 The Unit comprises two Emergency Planning Officers who report to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services. The Officers also represent the Council on the Strathclyde Emergency Co-ordinating Group (SECG).

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Since the Council was formed in 1996, the resources of the Emergency Planning Unit have been tested on a number of occasions. Examples of this include extensive flooding in several parts of the Council area; storm damage in Rankinston; and a foot and mouth incident.
- 3.2 Each of these emergencies has tested the resources of different Departments of the Council and on each occasion, the Council has measured well following evaluation by the emergency services.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Scottish Executive provides financial assistance to the Council for operating the Emergency Planning Unit.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Civil Contingency Act 2004.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Emergency Planning Unit meets the aspirations of the Community Plan in terms of 'Planning Together' and 'Working Together'.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Council's Emergency Planning Unit provides the first point of contact with the Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services in the event of an emergency situation. The principles of Integrated Emergency Management are therefore applied at all times.
- 7.2 While the Unit cannot anticipate the full range of emergencies which the Council might face, it has prepared a number of detailed plans to set out the Council's objectives should certain types of emergencies arise in the Council area.
- 7.3 All Council staff involved in a response to an emergency are kept fully briefed and given training throughout the year by the Emergency Planning Unit. Full debriefing takes places after each incident.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Doon Valley Local Committee is invited to note the report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/AC/JS

7th March 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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